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Summary:

Mike was the king of making big ass, stupid mistakes.

He was reminded of this when he checked in with himself and realized he was standing in front of Will Byers' bedroom door, holding a tube of expensive paint in the guy's favorite color, about to confess something he'd only just come to terms with himself this morning.

Shit.

thief

Author's Note:

hope you enjoy! im queermikewheeler on tumblr if you wanna follow me!

Mike was the king of making big ass, stupid mistakes.

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Shit.

Shit shit shit. What was he doing here? He thought about just turning around and leaving, but Mrs. Byers had already seen him come in. She would tell Will. And then he would ask questions Mike wouldn't be prepared to answer anymore if he left right then and there. So he didn't.

He knocked on Will's door three times exactly, in slow, deliberate motions. It was specific to him alone, so Will always knew who was on the other side of the door. Everyone had their own knock. It was just a thing they did now, after everything. No one was very fond of surprises anymore.

"Come in, Mike," Will's voice answered, and suddenly there was much less air in the house than there was before. He swallowed thickly and twisted the knob.

Will was sitting on his bed, looking handsome as ever. Senior year had been good to him, and after he *finally* cut his hair, there wasn't an eye in town that didn't linger on Will Byers. The other boy smiled as Mike shut the door behind him, fiddling with the tube in his hands. The motion drew Will's eyes downward, where he zeroed in on the paint and nearly blinded Mike with the brightness of his smile. "Is that for me?"

Mike replied by tossing it underhand at him, and Will caught it easily. His face radiated happiness, but he forced his features into a mock-stern expression. “Michael Theodore Wheeler, you *know* you’re supposed to be saving your money for college!”

He threw a hand over his heart as Will continued to struggle to hold a straight face. “My full name, wow. I’m wounded. I’ll have *you* know that I bought your gift with 100%, certified overtime hours. ‘Cause I’m just awesome like that.”

He grinned as Will stared at him in that strange, curious way he does sometimes. It made him a little uneasy, like Will could see right through him.

“All joking aside, I appreciate it. Thank you, Mike,” Will said, giving him a soft, genuine smile. His heart stuttered. “Actually... I’ve been meaning to talk to you about something.”

Shit.

“Yeah?” He asked, trying his absolute hardest to remain cool and collected. Or at least seem that way. His insides were exploding.

“Can you come sit? I won’t bite,” Will joked, but it fell a little flat from the sudden tone of uncertainty in his voice. His best friend stared at the tube of paint, flipping it over and over in his hands. Fidgeting. Nervous.

God, this is it, Mike thought as he sat down on the bed across from Will. This is the part where he tells me he knew about my feelings all this time, and that he’s flattered, but no, never, no thanks, don’t come around anymore.

“Uh–” Will cleared his throat, his mouth pulled in a slight grimace. “I just want to start by saying that I hope what I say next doesn’t change the way you think of me, or make you hate me. My therapist said I’d know when I was ready to come clean, and I am. I’m ready. I am,” he said, like he was trying to convince himself before he backed out. Mike wipes his hands on his jeans. He could handle this. He’d been preparing himself for rejection. At least Will was going to say it first, without him having to embarrass himself trying to confess.

“I... shit—” Will stammered, gripping the tube of paint now. Mike could hardly stand his shame. This was because of him. He put Will in an uncomfortable position with his feelings, and his best friend was struggling because of it.

“Will, it’s okay, you don’t have to—”

“No,” Will said, his eyebrows furrowing in determination. “I can do this.”

Mike could only sit there and try to take in the details of Will’s face before he never had the chance to again.

“I’m... in love with you, Mike.”

His words hung in the air, fragile, like a thin film of ice. One wrong move, one noise too loud, and they would shatter. Mike stared at Will, unable to do a single damn thing, his thoughts screaming at him to say something, anything, to let Will know he felt it too. But he couldn’t move. He was frozen.

Will looked up at him, his eyes shining, cheeks flushed, expression a symphony of anxiety, fear, and just the barest amount of hope, and god, Mike loved him so much it hurt to breathe. *Do something, he berated himself angrily. Before it’s too late!*

Will’s face fell. His expression pinched, just for a second, like he was about to break, and then smoothed out. “Please forget I just said that,” he whispered. “Please forget it.”

And as the tears welled up in Will’s eyes, the spell was broken.

Mike surged forward and took Will’s face in his hands, taking just a second to register the surprise on the other boy’s face, and kissed him.

There was no hesitation. No pause. Will kissed him back with the same intensity Mike was feeling, and then some. When they broke apart, they rested their foreheads together and breathed, giving each other shy smiles when their eyes met.

“You stole my line, Byers.”

“You stole something of mine, too. I’d say we’re even.”